

## PASTOR DOCTOR CHARLES EVERETT THOMAS

Pastor Dr. Charles Everett Thomas was born in Montgomery, Alabama and raised by Rev. Nathaniel and Fanny Thomas. In August 1950 he received his Bachelors degree in Business Administration from Selma University in Selma, Alabama. After acknowledging his calling to the Ministry, Rev. Thomas entered the American Baptist Theology Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee where he received a Bachelors Degree in Theology. He received an honorary doctorate degree from the Urban Bible Institute of Detroit, Michigan.

In June 1957, Rev. Thomas was called to Pastor the Bethlehem Baptist Church in Woodbury, New Jersey where he served that church and community until June 1968.

Later that same year, Rev. Thomas was called to the New Hope Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey and began his pastorship on August 6, 1968. The installation ceremonies conducted by Rev. I. S. Cole of Second Baptist Church in Atlantic City, New Jersey were held on October 13, 1968.

Evident in Pastor Thomas' ministry has been a strong commitment to both church and community. In January 1972, Rev. Thomas' first major project was the formation of the New Hope Day Care Center which was housed in the church's dining room. The Church subsequently purchased a four-story brick building with 7,500 square feet per floor at 111-119 Sussex Avenue and the Day Care Center moved to that site. The Day Care Center continues to this day as a successful operation and renders services for 66 children year-round, on a daily basis. The building is also the projected site for New Hope's Christian Academy grammar school to open in Fall 1997.

Thereafter, Pastor Thomas administered the development of the Minority Contractors and Craftsmen Trade Association and the New Hope Skills Center. These programs trained men in carpentry, masonry and machinery and enabled them to pursue careers in those fields. Both of these programs were housed on the third floor of 111-119 Sussex Avenue.

During this same period, Pastor Thomas reorganized the Scholarship Fund at New Hope. This fund provides financial assistance to any person who is a member of New Hope and has the desire and ability to attend college. Through his leadership and guidance, the Fund has provided substantial financial aid to deserving young men and women.

In 1975 Pastor Thomas organized the New Hope Development Corporation which was responsible for the building of New Hope Village, a 170-family housing complex in Newark which provides affordable housing. In addition, a Day Care Center was established.

Under his pastership, the New Hope Family continued to grow and in 1985 Pastor Thomas began to implement his dream of enlarging the church edifice. Pastor Thomas served as general contractor for the project. Together with the help of other dedicated New Hope members, he worked diligently on this renovation project. Through his vision, sacrifice, wisdom, leadership, guidance and struggle, his dream became a reality. On September 13, 1987, the members of New Hope Baptist Church marched back into a beautiful \$2,300,000 edifice with seating for over 1,200. On September 15, New Hope will celebrate the burning of the mortgage and preservation of a debt-free house of the Lord.

Pastor Thomas has also been active in the Progressive Baptist Convention. He has served as both President and Vice-President, serving two years in each position. Currently, Pastor Thomas is on the planning board.

Rev. Thomas believes in the nourishment of both mind and body. All new members of New Hope are required to attend service and leadership classes and all other members are encouraged to renew their strength and knowledge of Jesus Christ by attending these same classes.

Pastor Thomas is married to the former Marion Pope and they have one son, Matthew. Rev. Thomas is also the proud father of Chris, Charles, Robert, Sharon, Vincent and Makia.